

What is claimed is:

1. An article of footwear comprising an upper and a sole,

said sole comprising:

an outsole of a first material, said outsole having a periphery following the general contour of a human foot, said outsole having a forefoot portion and a

5 heel portion; and

at least one pod of a second, different material located in at least one of said portions of said outsole, said pod having a ground engaging end and an upper end, said upper end having a flange proximate thereto and extending outwardly therefrom, said pod being secured in situ within said first material, encapsulating said flange to form a ground-engaging surface generally
10 coterminous with said ground-engaging end of said pod.

2. An article of footwear as defined in claim 1, wherein said pod is positioned in said forefoot portion of said outsole.

3. An article of footwear as defined in claim 1, wherein said pod is positioned in said heel portion of said outsole.

4. An article of footwear as defined in claim 1, wherein said outsole is formed from polyurethane.

5. An article of footwear as defined in claim 1, wherein said pod is formed from rubber.

6. An article of footwear as defined in claim 1, wherein said flange defines a plurality of openings and said first material extends through said openings.

7. A article of footwear as defined in claim 1, wherein a plurality of pods are secured within said outsole.

8. An article of footwear as defined in claim 7, wherein said plurality of pods are located in at least one of said portions of said outsole.

9. A sole for footwear comprising:

an outsole formed from polyurethane, said outsole having a periphery following the general contour of a human foot, said outsole having a forefoot portion and a heel portion; and

5 a first pod and a second pod formed from rubber, said first pod positioned in said forefoot portion of said outsole and said second pod positioned in said heel portion of said outsole, said first and second pods having a ground-engaging end and an upper end, said upper ends having a flange proximate thereto and extending outwardly therefrom, said pods being secured in situ within
10 said polyurethane, said polyurethane encapsulating said flanges forming a ground-engaging surface generally coterminus with said ground-engaging ends of said pods.

10. A sole as defined in claim 9, wherein said flanges define a plurality of openings therein, said polyurethane extending through said openings.

11. A sole as defined in claim 9, wherein said ground-engaging ends of said pods are textured.

12. A sole as defined in claim 9, wherein said ground-engaging surface of said pods is textured.

13. A sole as defined in claim 9, wherein a plurality of pods are provided in at least one of said portions of said outsole.

14. A sole as defined in claim 13, wherein a plurality of pods are provided in both said forefoot and said heel portions of said outsole.

15. A method for manufacturing a sole for footwear, comprising the steps of:
providing a pair of mold sections, said mold sections collectively defining a complete cavity for said sole, one of said mold sections defining a cavity having at least one pod receiving section;

5 positioning a preformed pod into at least one of said pod receiving sections of said cavity, said pod having a ground-engaging end and an upper end, said upper end having a flange proximate thereto and extending outwardly therefrom, said at least one pod positioned such that said ground-engaging end will be surrounded by said pod receiving section while said flange extends
10 outward above said cavity;

bringing said mold sections together to form a complete mold cavity;

filling said mold cavity with a moldable material to form an outsole, said outsole material encapsulating said upper end of said at least one pod and said flange extending outwardly therefrom;

15 curing said moldable material;
separating said mold sections; and
removing the pod encapsulated outsole.

16. A method as defined in claim 15, further comprising the step of positioning a plurality of preformed pods into a like number of pod receiving sections of said cavity.

17. A method as defined in claim 15, wherein said preformed pod is formed from rubber.

18. A method as defined in claim 15, wherein said outsole is formed from polyurethane.

19. A method as defined in claim 15, wherein said flange defines a plurality of openings, said openings permitting said moldable material filling said mold cavity to flow through said openings and further encapsulate said pod.

20. A method as defined in claim 18, wherein said polyurethane is injected into said mold cavity.

21. A method for manufacturing a sole for footwear, comprising the steps of:
providing a pair of mold sections, said mold sections when united defining a forefoot cavity and a heel cavity for said sole, a lower portion of said forefoot and heel cavities each defining at least one pod receiving section;

5 positioning a preformed rubber pod into corresponding pod receiving sections, said pods having ground-engaging ends and upper ends, said upper ends having flanges proximate thereto and extending outwardly therefrom, said pods positioned such that each said pod ground-engaging end is surrounded by a corresponding pod receiving section while said flanges extend outward above

10 said respective cavities;

bringing said mold sections together to form a complete mold cavity;

filling said mold cavity with polyurethane to form an outsole, said polyurethane encapsulating said upper ends of said pods located therein and encapsulating said flanges;

curing said polyurethane;

5 separating said mold sections after allowing time for said polyurethane to cure; and

removing the pod encapsulated outsole.

22. A method as defined in claim 21, wherein said flanges define a plurality of openings, said polyurethane flowing through said openings and further encapsulating said pods.

23. A method as defined in claim 21, wherein said ground-engaging ends of said pods are textured.

24. A sole for footwear comprising:

an outsole of a first material, said outsole having a periphery following the general contour of a human foot, said outsole having a forefoot portion and a heel portion; and

5 at least one pod of a second, different material located in at least one of said portions of said outsole, said pod having a ground engaging end and an upper end, said upper end having a flange proximate thereto and extending outwardly therefrom, said pod being secured in situ within said first material, encapsulating said flange to form a ground-engaging surface generally

10 coterminous with said ground-engaging end of said pod.